

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
PROCLAMATION

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes Foundation is a pioneer in improving the health of infants and women of childbearing age by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes was founded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 to fight polio, and funded the development of two vaccines still in use today that virtually eliminated the crippling disease; and

WHEREAS: In 1958, the March of Dimes, having achieved its initial mission, shifted its attention from polio to the prevention of birth defects, and through federal and state advocacy led the way in establishing a nationwide network of birth defects monitoring programs and research centers; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes has undertaken decades of groundbreaking research in maternal and child health, which has led to the discovery of lifesaving products and tests such as surfactant therapy for premature infants and tests to identify life-threatening birth defects; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes was also a pioneer in the support of newborn screening, urging Congress to pass and fund the 2008 Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which established national guidelines on the conditions states should include in newborn programs, and through state advocacy ensured that every state screens all newborns for that core set of conditions; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes is a long-time advocate for access to health care for women of childbearing age, infants, children and families, ensuring they have access to private and public health coverage under private coverage, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicaid, Title V Block Grant and the Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS: In 2003, the March of Dimes launched the Prematurity Campaign to address the crisis of premature birth and help families have full-term, healthy babies, and authored the 2006 Premature Research Expansion and Education Act for Mothers (PREEMIE) Act, which Congress reauthorized in 2013 to expand research, education and services to fight premature births; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes has set a national goal of reducing preterm birth to 5.5 percent in every state by 2030, which will result in a healthier start in life for tens of thousands of infants; and

WHEREAS: 4,195 babies are born premature in the state of Arkansas, representing 10.8 percent of all state births; and

WHEREAS: Arkansas receives a grade of D and a disparity index ranking of 33 on the March of Dimes 2016 Premature Birth Report Card; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes in Arkansas has worked extensively to promote access to health services and health coverage that help to reduce premature birth and promote health equity; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes in Arkansas will work with the Governor and the Arkansas State Legislature in response to the continued crisis of premature birth; and

WHEREAS: The month of November is recognized as World Prematurity Awareness Month to bring about recognition of this global health crisis, and November 17th is recognized as Prematurity Awareness Day across the United States; and

WHEREAS: The March of Dimes and its volunteers continue to advocate for national and state health policies and programs that affect women of childbearing age, infants, children and families;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim November 17th, 2016, as

PREMATURITY AWARENESS DAY

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 4th day of October, in the year of our Lord 2016.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:



Mark Martin, Secretary Of State